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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 000896

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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MLS (BESTIC)
DEPARTMENT FOR PRM (PONGONIS)
DEPARTMENT FOR OPERATIONS CENTER
DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/EAP
BANGKOK FOR RMA SCHERER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2017
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [KN](#) [LA](#) [PREL](#) [SW](#)
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON DPRK CITIZENS AT SWEDISH EMBASSY

REF: VIENTIANE 893 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador Ravic R. Huso for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (U) This cable includes an action request. Please see paragraph 5.

12. (C) Summary: Swedish Charge Aberg told the Ambassador that she and her colleague had met with a senior MFA official who suggested, as long as the North Koreans left Laos, that his government was not concerned about their ultimate destination. He also said the North Korean Embassy is keeping its distance from the issue. The Swedes requested that a U.S. official come to Vientiane to speak to the North Koreans. Embassy is coordinating with Embassy Bangkok to have the Regional Refugee and Migration Affairs Officer come to Vientiane for this purpose. End Summary.

13. Q) Swedish Charge d'Affairs AnnLis Aberg, accompanied by Swedish Embassy Bangkok DCM Kaarlo Laasko, provided an update to the Ambassador about the situation of the two North Koreans who have been at the Swedish Embassy since 12/07/2007. The Swedish diplomats had called on MFA Director General Southam Sakonhninhom of the Europe and Americas Department to discuss the situation earlier in the day. Southam recommended they consult with the U.S. Embassy about the case since the U.S. Embassy had a similar case occur in 12005. Southam appeared also very open, according to the Swedish diplomats, about their asking the South Koreans for help in issuing identification to the two. Once the two were out of Laos, Southam appeared unconcerned about their final destination.

14. (C) The Swedish diplomats had received from their Ministry a request to have an American diplomat talk to the two North Koreans about the U.S. refugee program. The Ambassador agreed to see if Embassy Bangkok RMA Officer Scherer, the closest expert on these issues, would be available to come to Laos. The Swedes requested this happen soon. The Embassy is coordinating with Embassy Bangkok to have the officer, accompanied by an OPE translator, come to Vientiane as soon as possible. The Swedes believe that the two North Korean asylum seekers will be receptive to hearing an assessment of their options directly from a U.S. officer.

15. (C) Comment and Action Request: The critical element appears to be ROK willingness to issue documentation to the two asylum seekers to allow them to proceed to Thailand. The ROK procedure, as we understand it, is to provide such

documentation only for those who intend to travel to Seoul.
If this understanding is correct, Embassy would request
Department and Embassy Seoul assistance in encouraging the
ROK to demonstrate flexibility in this case and issue
documents required by the Lao even in the knowledge that the
destination for these two North Koreans is Thailand.
HUSO